



Lost Memories

CATALIN CROITORU

I love taking long walks in the City of Montreal. I love the old small streets paved with cubic rocks; I love the way people have of enjoying their lives here. Sometimes I carry my camera just for "freezing" the city life, the peace of the streets and the attitude of the inhabitants. Other times, I like to move from a place to another and put effort to picture the tall, shiny buildings and effervescent everyday life.

But there was a part of this city which remains unknown to new generations. Most often having a perimeter closed with high fences and the vegetation relentlessly invading – the old buildings slowly die, drowned into oblivion. And comes a day when bulldozers and excavators are brought into the spot and these architectural relics are left in a shapeless mass of rubble and dust.

For me, as a photographer, these abandoned buildings have a special charm. And a mystery too. I consider them fascinating, frightening and magnificent – all at the same time. Every time I start a photographic adventure around a place like this I feel like I'm stepping through a time gate. It seems that every time I press the shutter release, a fragment of the city's past is tripped to fall into the final oblivion.

For this reason, I decided to start the "Lost Memories" project. Full of excitement, I began creating a map of Montreal where I marked each of these abandoned places. I spent dozens of hours connected to the Internet, searching Google or Bing. I visited a bunch of forums related to urban explorations and put countless questions to the people that still remember some of the old architectural configuration of the city. This all started in November last year and lasted until May 2016.

Then, the messenger bag on my shoulder and the camera in my hand, I began to discover the buildings I was told were still erected or I have read about. I have visited so far three of these abandoned places; but I decided by midsummer 2017 to capture as many of those that were left unexplored as possible.

The Old Squeaky Crane

The first relic that I visited was the rusted crane in Lasalle. Also called "The Coke Crane," it is situated on the right bank of the Lachine Channel. Being 25 meters high building and definitely dominating the area, it is made almost exclusively of concrete beams and pillars; with one exception – at the first floor there's a room with concrete floor that supports the engines.

